Downsizing of Tobacco Board

4979. DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the statutory strength and the present strength of Tobacco Board;

(b) the number of vacancies in the Board and since when each vacancy is there;

(c) whether Government propose to trim the size of the Board to make it more effective; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDI): (a) and (b) The statutory strength as well as the present strength of the Tobacco Board is twenty-six. At present, there are no vacancies in the Board.

(c) and (d) The strength of the Board is based on the provisions of the Tobacco Board Act, 1975. Any change in this can be effected only after a thorough assessment of the various aspects of the Act and the relevance to present day requirements.

New State trading outfit

4980. SHRI K.B. KRISHNA MURTHY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether under the new Exim policy the import of diesel and petrol is to be handled only by State trading enterprises;

(b) if so, in what manner this proposal could be enforced without the consensus of private players in the oil sector since the petroleum sector has been de-regulated and new marketing companies have entered; and

(c) whether Government would identify a State trading outfit to handle a sensitive commodity like petroleum products the past record of India's State trading enterprises being dismal and STC being wound up and disinvested?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) to (c) Import of High Speed Diesel (HSD), Light Diesel Oil (LDO) and Motor Spirit have been always allowed through the Indian Oil Corporation (IOC). This Policy continues even today and IOC is the only designated State Trading Enterprise. It is true that the